

## **FOSTER-WOODS PAPERS, 1809-1908**

*Processed by:*

Harriett Chappell Owsley  
Manuscript Section  
Tennessee State Library and Archives

Accession Numbers 6, 7, 8, 151, 170, 194, 75-300, and 94-139

Date Completed: 9-15-60

Reprocessed by Cathi Carmack 4-14-97

Location: I-A-4

Microfilm Accession Number: 38 (correspondence only)

## INTRODUCTION

The Foster-Woods Papers consist of correspondence, accounts, and other documents of the Foster and Woods families of Middle Tennessee, spanning the years 1809-1908. The bulk of the papers are dated prior to the Civil War. The papers were obtained through gifts and by purchase. Miss Emmaline Cockrill, Nashville, Tenn., donated 35 Foster family letters on behalf of the National Society of Colonial Dames in America (NSCDA); Mrs. L.D. Maney, Nashville, Tenn., donated 15 items concerning the Woods family, also on behalf of the NSCDA; Dr. Alfred Leland Crabb, Nashville, Tenn., donated several items concerning the Foster family; Vernon M. Jones, Nashville, Tenn., donated 6 Foster letters; some 110 items concerning the Woods family were purchased from Mrs. Garnett Andrews; Rev. Paul B. Freeland donated letters and accounts; Murray Brosius, Nashville, Tenn., donated copies of 13 Woods family business letters; and Elizabeth Woods Walker, Memphis, Tenn., donated 12 Woods family letters.

The collection occupies .42 linear feet of shelf space and consists of approximately 225 items. Literary rights to the unpublished writings contained in the Foster-Woods Papers have been dedicated to the public. Single photocopies of unpublished writings may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Foster-Woods Papers are divided into two series: Foster family papers (Series 1) and Woods family papers (Series 2). Although the families intermarried, the papers have been divided for ease of understanding. Correspondence makes up the largest part of the papers, but accounts, land records, legal documents, and sketches are also included. The Foster family series includes letters of Ephraim H. Foster, prominent in Tennessee politics in the 1830s and 1840s and one of the founders of the Whig Party in Tennessee. The papers also include letters written by the children of Ephraim H. and Jane Dickinson Foster, particularly Robert III, John D., Julia, and Sallie. The double connection between the Foster and Woods families comes in the marriages of Robert Coleman Foster IV to Julia Hannah Woods and Joseph Leonidas Woods to Francis (Fanny) M. Foster (see attached family charts). Julia and Joseph Leonidas Woods were children of Robert Woods and Sarah West, thus connecting the West family. Julia eventually became the owner of her parents home, "Westwood." Featured in the Woods family series are letters of Julia's brother, James A. Woods, to his father, Robert Woods. There are also items in the papers relating to painter William E. West, brother of Sarah West Woods, and to Charles Armistead and his wife, Mary Robina Woods.

The Foster-Woods Papers not only shed light on the political activities of Ephraim H. Foster; they also document the daily lives of two prominent Middle Tennessee families.

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**  
**EPHRAIM HUBBARD FOSTER**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 1794, Sept. 17 | Born at Bardstown, Ky., son of Ann Hubbard and Robert Coleman Foster.   |
| 1797           | Moved to Nashville, Tenn. area.   |
| 1813           | Graduated from Cumberland College, began study of law in John Dickinson's office.   |
| 1814-1815      | Private Secretary to Andrew Jackson during the Creek War. Returned to law practice at end of war, became a partner of William L. Brown (later a Supreme Court justice). |
| 1817           | Married widow of John Dickinson, Jane Mebane Lytle Dickinson.   |
| 1827-1835      | Three times elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives. Twice unanimously chosen Speaker of the House. One of the founders of the Whig Party in Tennessee.       |
| 1833           | Opposed John H. Eaton, John Bell, and Felix Grundy in contest for U.S. Senate. Grundy was elected on the 55th ballot.   |
| 1835           | Broke with Andrew Jackson. Persuaded Hugh L. White to become candidate for President.   |
| 1837           | Elected to the U.S. Senate to succeed Grundy, whose term expired in 1839.   |
| 1838           | Appointed to succeed Grundy, who resigned to accept a seat in Van Buren's cabinet.  |
| 1838-1840      | Served as Senator from Tennessee with Hugh L. White as his colleague.   |

- 1840 Foster and White resigned from the Senate because they could not follow the instructions given by the Tennessee legislature, which had become Democratic.
- 1840 Whig candidate for Elector for the state at large. Whigs were triumphant.
- 1843 Elected Senator for the second time, defeating William Carroll.
- 1845 Term as Senator ended. Ran for Governor as Whig candidate but was defeated by Aaron V. Brown.  
Voted against annexation of Texas.
- 1854 Died Sept. 14.

**CONTAINER LIST**  
**BOX 1**

Series 1: Foster Family Papers

1. Accounts
2. Appointment--Foster, Robert Coleman (1818-1871)
3. Correspondence--Allen-Fogg
4. Correspondence--Foster, Ephraim H.
5. Correspondence--Foster, Francis Fogg-Foster, John D.
6. Correspondence--Foster, Robert Coleman (1769-1844)-Foster, Sarah C.
7. Correspondence--Henry-Otey
8. Correspondence--Pageot--Webster
9. Court Records--Law License--Foster, Robert Coleman (1796-1871)
10. Election Certificate--Foster, Robert Coleman (1818-1871)
11. Inventory, Personal--Booth, William
12. Land Records
13. Legal Documents--Affidavit--Foster, Robert Coleman (1769-1844)
14. Military Records--Order--Patterson, Robert, Maj. Gen.
15. Photograph--Foster, J.D.
16. School Records--Foster, Francis Fogg
17. Stock Certificate--Foster, Robert Coleman (1824-1879)

**CONTAINER LIST**  
**BOX 1 (cont'd)**

Series 2: Woods Family

18. Accounts--Armistead, Jane Foster
19. Accounts--Armistead, Robina Woods
20. Accounts--Foster, Julia Woods
21. Accounts--Woods, James Campbell
22. Accounts--Woods, S.B.W.
23. Auction Notice--Armistead, Robert Lewis
24. Correspondence--Abeel-Campbell
25. Correspondence--Foster-Handy
26. Correspondence--Layton-West
27. Correspondence--Wood, Frances Foster-Woods, Jane West
28. Correspondence--Woods, Joseph
29. Correspondence--Woods, Joseph Leonidas-unidentified
30. Diary Fragment--Woods, S.B.W.
31. Inventory, Household--"Westwood"
32. Land Records--Hay, Ann
33. Land Records--Woods Family
34. Legal Documents--Marriage--Woods, Robert
35. Legal Documents--Will--Woods, Robert
36. Miscellaneous Items
37. Obituary--Houston, Catharine C.
38. Sketches--West, William Edward
39. Sketches--Woods Family
40. Sketches--Woods Family Gardens
41. Veterinary Records--Diary Herd Health Certificate--Armistead, Carl M.

**BOX 2**

Contains photographs of James A. Woods and Elizabeth Campbell Woods

## **INDEX TO FOSTER CORRESPONDENCE**

Allen, Y.D., to Foster and Fogg, 4-15-1852  
Campbell, William B., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 8-23-1851  
Caruthers, Jas., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 10-1-1853  
Cheatham, Ellen Foster, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 7-5-1850  
Crittenden, J.J., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 8-7-1845  
Eve, Paul F., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 7-28-1853  
Ewing, Andrew, to [Ephraim Hubbard Foster], 7-31-1850  
Fogg, Ellen S., to [Ephraim Hubbard Foster], 2-15-1849  
Foster, Ephraim Hubbard, to Ellen Foster Cheatham(6), 1838-1850, n.d.  
Foster, Ephraim Hubbard, to Sarah Foster Cockrill, 8-8-1851  
Foster, Ephraim Hubbard, to Jane Dickinson Foster (2), 1847  
Foster, Ephraim Hubbard, to Robert Coleman Foster (1796-1871) 12-20-1823  
Foster, Francis Fogg, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster (2), 1852  
Foster, J.L., Mrs., to Jane Armistead, 5-8-1908  
Foster, James H., to Robert Coleman Foster (1818-1871), 12-7-1837  
Foster, John Dickinson, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster (4), 1850-1852, n.d.  
Foster, Robert Coleman (1769-1844), to Robert Coleman Foster (1796-1871), 10-31-1817  
Foster, Robert Coleman (1796-1871), to Robert Coleman Foster (1769-1844), 3-23-1819  
Foster, Robert Coleman (1796-1871), to John Sommerville, 2-4-1832  
Foster, Robert Coleman (1818-1871), to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 4-19-1847  
Foster, Robert Coleman (1818-1871), to Jane Dickinson Foster (3), 1833, 1845-1846  
Foster, Sarah C., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 11-20-1852  
Henry, G.A., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster (2), 1853  
Hood, Julia Foster, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster (2), 1849, n.d.  
MacGregor, George, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 12-6-1851  
Maxey, A.G., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster (2), 1851-1852  
Otey, James H., to Jane Dickinson Foster, 9-24-1845  
Pageot, Mary Lewis, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 3-26-1851  
Read, John, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 10-26-1852  
Rogers, Th. H., to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 7-31-1850  
Saunders, Turner, to Robert Coleman Foster (1796-1871), 12-15-1845  
Taylor, Jesse, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 6-6-1843  
Van Dyke, T. Nixon, to Ephraim Hubbard Foster, 9-17-1853  
Webster, Rom C., to \_\_\_\_\_, n.d.



## **INDEX TO WOODS CORRESPONDENCE**

Abeel, Sarah, to Sarah Browne West Woods, 3-13-1843  
Armistead, Peter F., to Jonathan Beckwith, 12-22-1851  
Batey, J., to William D.V. Downing, 12-20-1842  
Beckwith, Andrew B., to Jonathan Beckwith, 7-22-1835  
Branch, John Richard, to James Americus Woods, 2-17-1841  
Branch, Josephine Woods, to Sarah Browne West Woods, 6-23-1852  
Campbell, Caroline B., to James Americus Woods, n.d.  
Campbell, Catherine West, to Robert Woods, n.d.  
Campbell, Catherine West, to Sarah Browne West Woods, 6-11-1818  
Campbell, John A., to James Americus Woods, 2-21-1848  
Foster, Julia Woods, to Joseph Leonidas Woods (4), 1845, 1871  
Glasier, Anna and Elizabeth, to Mary W. Frost, 4-10-1836  
Grier, Mrs., to \_\_\_\_\_, 189? [partial]  
Handy, Edward Smith, to James Woods, 10-11-1845  
Handy, Edward Smith, to James Americus Woods, 5-18-1843  
Handy, Edward Smith, to Sarah Browne West Woods (2), 1849-1851  
Layton, Thomas, to James Americus Woods, 7-19-1846  
McGahan, T.R., to Welker and Key, 5-9-1861  
Partrick, William and Elizabeth, to James Duff Partrick, 7-19-1808  
Price, Maria West, to Sarah Browne West Woods, n.d.  
Rotan, Ed, to Em Clenny, 6-18-1861  
Thomas, J.H., to James Americus Woods, 3-6-1839  
Wade, William, to Joseph and Robert Woods, 2-14-1839  
Walker, M., to Sarah Browne West Woods, 4-8-1823  
West, Patterson B., to Sarah Browne West Woods, 10-29-1858  
Woods, \_\_\_\_\_, to Frank Woods, 7-30-1873  
Woods, Francis Foster, to \_\_\_\_\_[mother] (2), 1860, 1866  
Woods, Francis Foster, to Frank Woods, 9-26-1872  
Woods, Frank, to \_\_\_\_\_, 7-30-1890  
Woods, James, to Robert Woods, 8-30-1839  
Woods, James Americus, to Robert Coleman Foster (1824-1879), 3-26-1866  
Woods, Jane Theora, to James Americus Woods (4), 1839-1840  
Woods, Jane Theora, to Robert Fulton Woods, 4-15-1840  
Woods, Jane West, to Joseph Woods (2), 1818, 1826  
Woods, Jane West, to Sarah Browne West Woods (3), 1818, 1843

Woods, Joseph, to Robert Woods (11), 1839-1842  
Woods, Joseph Leonidas, to Francis Foster Woods (5), 1863-1864  
Woods, Robert, to James Americus Woods (5), 1838-1841  
Woods, Robert L., to Frank Woods, 7-30-1873  
Woods, Sarah Browne West, to Joseph Leonidas Woods, n.d.  
Woods, [Trina?], to Sarah Browne West Woods, 3-5-1851  
\_\_\_\_\_, Susan, to James Woods, 3-13-1843  
\_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_ Woods, 5-2-1840